Adolph Blitz, M.D. Cincinnati College of Medicine and Surgery, 1873; a veteran of the Civil War and a specialist in diseases of the eye, ear, nose and throat of Boise, Ida.; formerly a member of the American Medical Association; died at his home in Boise, November 19, from carcinoma of the stomach, aged 66.

Milton Robert Bailey, M.D. Western Reserve University, Cleveland, O., 1882; of East Peoria, Ill.; local surgeon of the Peoria and Pekin Union Railroad; for several years treasurer of the village and a member of the board of school inspectors; died in St. Francis Hospital, Peoria, November 22, from tuberculosis, aged 56.

Leroy M. Bingham, M.D. University of Vermont, Burlington, 1870; a member of the Vermont State Medical Society; for twenty years chief of the surgical staff of the Mary Fletcher Hospital, Burlington; chief surgeon of the Rutland Railroad; died at his home in Burlington, November 27, aged 66.

William Flowers Scales, M.D. University of Alabama, Mobile, 1887; formerly a member of the American Medical Association; for twenty years a practitioner of Macon, Miss., and local surgeon of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad; died in Providence Hospital, Mobile, September 23, aged 47.

David Corwin Bice, M.D. State University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1875; a member of the American Medical Association; formerly of De Soto and Des Moines, Ia.; died in St. Luke's Hospital, Denver, November 26, after an abdominal section, aged 59.

John Wagner, M.D. Cooper Medical College, 1873; of San Francisco; a member of the American Medical Association and a veteran of the Civil War; died from heart disease while cranking his automobile, November 22, aged 63.

Martin Schnabel, M.D. University of California, San Francisco, 1873; a member of the Medical Society of the State of California; formerly of Newcastle; died at his home in Sacramento, November 21, aged 65.

Will McCaw, M.D. College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City, 1888; a member of the Medical Society of the State of New York; of Geneva; died in Albuquerque, N. Mex., November 16, aged 48.

Jacob L. Fuller, M.D. Memphis Hospital Medical College, 1907; died at his home in Humboldt, Tenn., November 23, from injuries received in a fall several months before, aged 52.

Cyrus Otway Weller, M.D. Jefferson Medical College, 1869; a member of the State Medical Association of Texas; died at his home in Austin, November 1, from influenza, aged 70.

Walter Newton Humphrey, M.D. Jefferson Medical College, 1893; a member of the Allegheny County Medical Society; died at his home in Sharpsburg, Pa., recently, aged 41.

H. C. Barkhousen (years of practice, Illinois, 1877); said to have been the oldest practitioner in Alexander County; died at his home in Unity, November 9, aged 94.

William H. Somerville, M.D. Hahnemann Medical College, Philadelphia, 1881; died at his home in Kensington, Philadelphia, November 6, from nephritis, aged 55.

James Ellison Venters, M.D. Hospital College of Medicine, Louisville, 1906; died at his home in Whitesburg, Ky., November 24, from typhoid fever, aged 36.

Charles E. Thomas, M.D. Jefferson Medical College, 1857; of Woodbury, N. J.; died suddenly in Philadelphia, November 13, from heart disease, aged 73.

Bennett Thomas Welch, University of Buffalo, N. Y., 1907; of Buffalo, N. Y.; died in Butte, Mont., October 29, from typhoid fever, aged 27.

Ollie C. Brake, M.D. Birmingham (Ala.) Medical College, 1908; of Raton, N. M.; died recently from hemorrhage of the bowels, aged 35.

Clifford Emmett Allen, M.D. University of California, San Francisco, 1896; died at his home in Stockton, Cal., November 5, aged 40.

Carrie F. Young, M.D. California Medical College (Eclectic), San Francisco, 1884; died at her home in Berkeley, November 3, aged 83.

Albert D. Alexander, M.D. University of Alabama, Mobile, 1888; of Merrouge, La.; died at Hot Springs, Ark., May 17, aged 45.

Jacob Sears Starr (license, Iowa, 1886; years of practice); died at his home in Lacona, November 4, aged 79.

Correspondence

Rebreathing in Anesthesia

To the Editor:—I desire to correct the report of my remarks (THE JOURNAL, Nov. 11, 1911, p. 1611) in the discussion of the paper by Dr. Gatch on anesthesia. The notes as printed are in part exactly opposed to my real views. I am strongly in favor of Dr. Gatch's method of administering nitrous oxid, instead of being opposed to it. In my remarks on Dr. Gatch's use of the principle of rebreathing, I aimed to emphasize the importance of the practice. I pointed out that Nature herself, by the very structure of the human body, causes us to breathe, through a tube, namely, the trachea, pharynx, nose and mouth, and that thus we normally rebreathe to the extent of about 30 per cent. Rebreathing from a bag, as practiced by Dr. Gatch, or through a tube, is a simple, entirely rational and effective method of combating the hyperpnea of pain and of the stage of excitement during anesthesia.

YANDELL HENDERSON, New Haven, Conn.

Benzoate of Soda Again

To the Editor:—An editorial entitled "Benzoate of Soda Again," in THE JOURNAL, Nov. 4, 1911, contains certain features so manifestly unfair and misleading that anyone who respects truth must be impelled to utter a word of emphatic protest. The question as to the permissibility of the use of preservatives in general, or of any preservative in particular, may obviously involve more than the physiologic effects of the substance under discussion. Thus a preservative might be found to be physiologically harmless, and yet its use be contrary to public policy. It may fairly be debated whether the employment of a substance which will conceal inferiority or uncleanliness should be allowed in any event. In the case of saccharin, its exclusion has been suggested for the most part on other than purely physiologic grounds. In your editorial similar general or practical considerations in relation to sodium benzoate are discussed.

The physiologic action of a substance, on the other hand, is something which can be ascertained by experimental investigation. It is to this phase of the preservative question that the Referee Board appointed by President Roosevelt primarily directed its attention with an intelligent appreciation of what scientific research involves. In referring to this aspect of the matter in the editorial under discussion the following paragraph is introduced:

"And now comes from Berlin the 'Expert Opinion of the Royal Scientific Deputation for Medical Affairs Regarding the Use of Benzoic Acid and Its Salts for the Preservation of Food.' These experts were requested by the Minister of Education and Medical Affairs in Germany to give their opinion on this subject. In their report, they first describe the chemical and physiologic action of these drugs and then briefly summarize the findings of various scientists on the question at issue. Of the decision of the United States Referee Board, these German scientists say:

> "'The series of experiments in this connection made by the American scientists are of too short duration and the results coupled with certain limitations, so that they cannot be regarded as demonstrating the unconditional non-injurious nature.'"

This apparent impeachment of the conclusions of a most representative group of American scientists and of the results of a series of physiologic researches that will stand for some time as types of thorough investigation, must have awakened some confusion and not a little surprise in the minds of the thousands of readers who are not familiar with the results of science at first hand, but learn the merits of modern research from the columns of THE JOURNAL. One who has personally studied the report of the United States Referee Board will find it hard to believe that two German scientists like Professors Heffter and Abel (who comprised the "Royal Scientific Deputation" mentioned in the editorial) should, without further experimental evidence, find occasion to contradict the guarded conclusions in the United States Referee Board's Report. A reference to the German "expert opinion" (*Gut-*

achten) shows on the contrary that instead of impugning the conclusions of the United States Referee Board the German Commission has actually accepted them in every detail. Let me quote their opinion verbatim:

"Zusammenfassend darf man wohl sagen, dass die Benzoesäure und das benzoesaure Natrium erst in verhältnismässig hohen Gaben eine Giftwirkung auf den Organismus entfalten. Aus dem regelmässigen Vorkommen der Hippursäure, des Paarungsproduktes der Benzoesäure, im menschlichen Harn ist zu schliessen, dass kleine Mengen benzoesaurer Salze, die aus der pflanzlichen Nahrung stammen oder aus Bestandteilen dieser Nahrung durch Oxydation entstehen, im Blute kreisen. Man darf hieraus sowie aus den Versuchen der amerikanischen Kommission wohl den Schluss ziehen, dass Mengen bis zu etwa 0,5 g. Benzoesäure in kleinen Mengen tagsüber genossen, für den menschlichen Körper als harmlos zu bezeichnen sind. Ob grössere Gaben (Mengen von mehreren Grammen) auf die Dauer von allen Menschen ebenso folgenlos ertragen werden, ist mit Sicherheit vorläufig nicht zu beantworten. Die in dieser Beziehung vorliegenden Versuchsreihen der amerikanischen Gelehrten sind von zu kurzer Ausdehnung und die Ergebnisse mit gewissen Einschränkungen versehen, so dass sie als beweisend für die unbedingte Unschädlichkeit nicht angesehen werden können."

"Die Wirkungslosigkeit kleiner Dosen Benzoesäure beruht offenbar darauf, dass sie durch die Verwandlung in Hippursäure entgiftet wird. Das Entgiftungsvermögen des menschlichen Organismus beruht auf seinem Glykokollvorrat, und er ist anscheinend imstande, wie aus den angeführten Beobachtungen hervorgeht, ziemlich erhebliche einmalig gereichte Benzoesäuremengen zu entgiften, d.h. zu paaren. Ob dieses Schutzvermögen auch bei der beständigen Zufuhr grösserer Benzoesäuremengen sich ausreichend erweisen würde und ob vor allen Dingen auch Personen mit beschwächten Körper oder bei geringer Eiweisszufuhr dazu imstande wären, ist nicht erwiesen." (From Vierteljahrsschrift für gerichtliche Medizin und öffentliches Sanitätswesen, Dritte Folge, XLI Band, 2 Heft; Jahrgang 1911, Heft 2 (April, 1911), pp. 330-336.)

Translation.—"In review it may be stated that benzoic acid and sodium benzoate exert a toxic action only in comparatively large doses. From the regular occurrence of hippuric acid, the product of conjugation with benzoic acid, in the human urine, one must conclude that small quantities of benzoate derived from vegetable foods or by oxidation of constituents of such foods circulate in the blood. *From this, as well as from the experiments of the American commission, the conclusion can be drawn that quantities of benzoic acid approximating 0.5 g. consumed in small portions throughout the day, are to be designated as harmless for the human body.* Whether *larger quantities* (portions of *several grams*) can likewise be tolerated without effect continuously by all persons cannot at present be answered with certainty. The series of experiments in this connection made by the American scientists are of too short duration and the results coupled with certain limitations, so that they cannot be regarded as demonstrating the unconditional non-injurious nature.

"The inertness of small doses of benzoic acid obviously depends on detoxication by conversion into hippuric acid. The capacity of the human organism to detoxicate depends on its glycocoll reserve, which apparently is capable, as demonstrated by the quoted experiments, of rendering non-toxic, i. e., conjugating with very considerable quantities of benzoic acid administered once. Whether this protective capacity would suffice when the larger quantities of benzoic acid continue to be introduced and whether above all individuals with weakened bodies or low protein intake would be capable thereof, has not been demonstrated." (The italics are mine.)

The sentence in the German report in reference to the fact that the harmlessness of benzoate cannot be regarded as conclusively demonstrated, owing to the short duration of the trials, etc., clearly refers to large doses (quantities of several grams) and is in no way in conflict with the published conclusions of the Referee Board. In THE JOURNAL'S editorial, however, this sentence has been adroitly detached from its context and made to apply to "the decision of the United States Referee Board," without further specific restriction. The suppression of truth cannot readily be defended, though it does at times occur in the ardent defense of some worthy cause; but the distortion of facts always calls for condemnation from everyone who stands for honesty in science. In this respect it seems as if the editorial in question had employed the very methods of attack which THE JOURNAL has so often (and properly) condemned in the patent-medicine faker and the antivivisection propagandist.

The injustice done to the report of the Referee Board and the incompetence thereby indirectly charged to its authors by the promulgation of this perverted review of the German *Gutachten* extends beyond the subscription list of THE JOURNAL. The editorial has been copied in the columns of *Science* (Nov. 10, 1911, p. 638), without apparent verification, criticism, or correction; and owing to the enormous prestige of both of these journals the misleading statement will doubtless receive further widespread repetition by periodicals and individuals who rely on the two American journals which are assumed to represent the highest ideals of science. It is unfortunate that the enthusiasm for any propaganda should render its supporters unable to differentiate the value of the reform proposed and the validity of the evidence collected in relation thereto. A frank admission of truth ought not to injure any worthy cause.

LAFAYETTE B. MENDEL, New Haven, Conn.

[COMMENT.—The points raised in this letter were discussed editorially in THE JOURNAL, Nov. 25, 1911.—EDITOR.]

Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

AN INCOMPATIBLE PRESCRIPTION

To the Editor:—The following is a prescription that I saw recently. I am curious to know what will be the result of this mixture.

The prescription is as follows:

℞

Potas. Iodid	3i
Acid. Nitric. Dil.	3iii
Tr. Belladonnæ	3i
Ac. Salicylic	3i
Aq. Camph. q. s.	3iii

Sig.: Two teaspoonfuls three times a day in water.

H. W.

ANSWER.—Theoretically, the result of making a mixture according to the above prescription would be that the nitric acid would liberate some iodin from the potassium iodid and that this iodin would react with the alkaloids in the tincture of belladonna with the formation of an insoluble periodid. Further, the amount of salicylic acid is such that most of it would be insoluble in the liquid present.

A practical trial confirms this. When the potassium iodid is dissolved in water and the nitric acid added, some free iodin appears and, on the addition of the tincture of belladonna, the solution becomes turbid. In the finished prescription a large proportion of the salicylic acid remains undissolved.

THE LAST NOBEL PRIZE

To the Editor:—Recently a local newspaper stated that a Swedish scientist had received the Nobel prize for his researches in dietetics. Please inform me in regard to the nature of this work which merited such a prize. OTTO V. HUFFMAN, M.D., Cincinnati.

ANSWER.—As THE JOURNAL stated recently (November 25, p. 1774) the Nobel prize in medicine for this year has been awarded to Dr. Gullstrand, professor of ophthalmology at the University of Upsala, Sweden, for his research on dioptries, that part of optics which treats of refraction. The proofreader on "the local newspaper" was thinking evidently more of his Thanksgiving turkey than of his "copy" when he made "dioptrics" read "dietetics."

THE ACNE BACILLUS

To the Editor:—Please describe the acne bacillus and give me the method of growing it. G. A., Harrisburg, Pa.

ANSWER.—The *Bacillus acne* is a short, thick, slightly curved bacillus which often becomes longer and thicker in cultures, and in old cultures develops branching forms. The organism is slightly motile, non-capsulated and stains by Gram's method. It grows on practically all media; on agar as a pure white pultaceous mass, elevated, moist, smooth and glossy. It is pathogenic for mice and guinea-pigs, and is agglutinated by the patient's serum in dilutions up to 1:100.

REMOVAL OF TATTOOING

To the Editor:—Please describe the best method of removing a tattooed design on the skin of the hand. Kindly mention references. H. M. L.

ANSWER.—This query was answered in THE JOURNAL, July 22, 1911, p. 310. The various methods are described in the standard works on dermatology.